



**MAY 8, 2014**

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***TRAC MAYORS ASK PRESIDENT OBAMA TO TAKE LEADERSHIP  
ON THE SAFETY OF TRANSPORTING CRUDE OIL AND ETHANOL BY RAIL  
Local Government Leaders Say Regulator "Advisory" to Industry is Wholly Inadequate  
When 5,000 Tank Cars Banned by Canada are Poised to Enter the U.S.***

**CHICAGO** – In response to what has almost amounted to a monthly derailment of crude oil and ethanol trains in North America in the recent past, the co-chairs of the TRAC Coalition sent a letter today to President Barack Obama asking that he take a leadership role in rail safety as it relates to these highly explosive commodities. This letter is in response to a recent decision by Canada to ban 5,000 of the most dangerous tank cars from Canadian service by May 23 and the May 7 "emergency advisory" issued jointly by the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) and Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration (PHMSA). Safety Advisory, Number 2014-01 is directed to the rail industry and "strongly" recommends the "use of tank cars with the highest level of integrity in their fleet when transporting Bakken crude oil."

*"Just two weeks ago, the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) held a two-day public forum on the safe transport of ethanol and crude oil by rail. An array of expert witnesses made it clear that the entire fleet of tank cars used to transport crude oil and ethanol are simply not built to standards that make them crashworthy containers for these volatile hazardous commodities," says Karen Darch, Mayor of Barrington, IL and TRAC co-chair. "Yet regulators fail to act quickly or use the U.S. Department of Transportation's emergency powers to get a more robust fleet into service as quickly as possible, while ignoring the reality that the tank cars that will be illegal to operate in Canada by the end of this month may be shifted to the U.S to join an unknown number already operating here. Instead, they provide a mere suggestion that industry can choose to ignore."*

Mayor Tom Weisner of Aurora, IL, and TRAC co-chair underscores the concerns of Illinois municipalities on this matter, *"Illinois is ground zero in the production and transport of ethanol. We became involved in this tank car issue following an ethanol train derailment outside of Rockford, IL in 2009 that killed a woman. Yet regulators move at a glacially slow pace, and ignore the reality that in seven of eight derailments in the U.S. between 2006 and 2012 that involved catastrophic derailments in which the tank car literally blew apart, the commodity involved was ethanol. We are counting on President Obama's leadership to be a game-changer in overcoming the regulatory logjam that exists."*

Local elected government leaders have joined the repeated calls by the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) – a federal agency that investigates and makes safety recommendations – to institute improved safety standards for all DOT-111 tank cars. Despite 20-plus years of NTSB investigations, studies, and reports, federal regulators are delaying the adoption of new safety-enhancing regulations due to what TRAC co-chairs refer to as "paralysis by analysis." Municipal leaders are calling on President Obama to step in and force regulators to act aggressively to protect the safety of the American people before more lives are needlessly lost and additional communities destroyed. The TRAC letter to President Obama is attached.

In the wake of the tragic 2013 Lac-Mégantic, Quebec derailment that killed 47 people and decimated that small town, the TRAC Coalition, an ad hoc group of local governments in the greater Chicagoland area, as well as the Cross-Border Municipal Coalition for Railway Safety, founded by the Union of Quebec Municipalities have been working in partnership to urge both governments to institute the safety enhancements vital to assuring public safety in the rail transport of crude oil and ethanol.

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